

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9966

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 9057

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ID

SUBJECT: OPPOSITIONISTS FORM POLITICAL FOUNDATION

1. SUMMARY: A NUMBER OF WELL KNOWN POLITICAL OPPONENTS OF THE SUHARTO GOVERNMENT HAVE ESTABLISHED A FOUNDATION TO PROMOTE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE 1945 CONSTITUTION. THE FOUNDERS INCLUDE SENIOR MEMBERS OF BOTH THE MUSLIM-SUPPORTED DEVELOPMENT UNITY PARTY (PPP) AND THE INDONESIAN DEMOCRACY PARTY (PDI), AND SOME OBSERVERS INTERPRET THEIR PARTICIPATION AS A FORM OF PREPARATION FOR THE 1982 GENERAL ELECTIONS. SEVERAL OF THE FOUNDERS HAVE BEEN PROMINENT CRITICS OF SUHARTO'S ADMINISTRATION FOR MANY YEARS, INCLUDING FORMER VICE PRESIDENT HATTA, GENERAL A.H. NASUTION, AND AUTHOR MOCHTAR LUBIS, AND THEY CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE THEIR CRITICISM THROUGH THE FOUNDATION. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JUNE 30 A GROUP OF 29 PROMINENT INDONESIANS, MOST OF
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THEM WELL KNOWN OPPONENTS OF THE SUHARTO ADMINISTRATION, ANNOUNCED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FOUNDATION/ INSTITUTE FOR PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS OF THE 1945 CONSTITUTION. THE FOUNDERS INCLUDE FORMER VICE PRESIDENT MOHAMMED HATTA, FORMER ARMED FORCES CHIEF GENERAL A.H. NASUTION, FORMER JAKARTA GOVERNOR ALI SADIKIN, AND AUTHOR MOCHTAR LUBIS. PPP LEADERS NUDDIN LUBIS, IMAN

SOFWAN, AND M. RADJAB RANGGASOLI WERE REPRESENTED, ALONG WITH SANUSSI HARDJADINATA, SABAM SIRAIT, AND MRS. D. WALANDOUW OF THE PDI. ALSO INCLUDED WERE FOUR YOUTH LEADERS, FORMER MALARI DETAINEES UDILHERRY JUSTAM AND MARSILAN SIMANJUNTAK AND CATHOLIC STUDENT LEADERS CHRIS SINER KEY TIMU AND R.A.FA. MULLY.

3. THE FOUNDATION IS NOT YET FULLY ORGANIZED, BUT IT IS BELIEVED THAT AZIZ SALEH, FORMER MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE NOW ACTIVE IN THE SCOUTING MOVEMENT WILL BE ITS CHAIRMAN. ACCORDING TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT, THE MEMBERS WILL PROMOTE STUDY, DISCUSSION, AND RESEARCH ON THE CONSTITUTION, AS WELL AS EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC ON CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS. IN ITS FIRST STAGES THE INSTITUTION WILL WORK THROUGH STUDY CLUB PROGRAMS AND PUBLICATIONS. EXPLAINING THE NEED FOR THE FOUNDATION TO REPORTERS, GENERAL NASUTION COMMENTED, "IN CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS WE ARE LIKE SOCCER PLAYERS. WHEN THE RULES OF THE GAME ARE NOT OBSERVED, WE CAN'T SCORE GOALS EXCEPT WITH FOUL PLAY".

4. ASKED BY REPORTERS FOR HIS COMMENTS ON THE NEW FOUNDATION, KOPKAMTIB COMMANDER ADMIRAL SUDOMO SAID HE WELCOMED EVERY ACTIVITY WHICH AIMS AT ENHANCING THE PEOPLE'S POLITICAL AWARENESS, AND ANY PRIVATE EFFORT WHICH SEEKS TO INTENSIFY NATIONAL AWARENESS AND DISCIPLINE IN A POSITIVE MANNER WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE AND WELCOME. ASKED IF THE FOUNDATION

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WOULD SERVE AS THE VOICE OF THOSE DISSATISFIED WITH PRESENT CONDITIONS, SUDOMO REPLIED, "DON'T VIEW IT FROM THAT ASPECT".

5. ALI MURTOPO'S ARMED FORCES NEWSPAPER BERITA YUDHA PUBLISHED A CARTOON THE FOLLOWING DAY SHOWING A MAN RESEMBLING NUDDIN LUBIS HOLDING A SHIELD MARKED "POLITICAL FOUNDATION 1978" AND WELKING DOWN A PATH TOWARD THE 1982 GENERAL ELECTIONS. THE PRESTIGIOUS DAILY KOMPAS WELCOMED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FOUNDATION AND APPLAUDED SUDOMO'S ACCEPTANCE OF IT.

6. COMMENT: THIS ALL-STAR COLLECTION OF SUHARTO'S CRITICS IS CERTAIN TO USE THE NEW FOUNDATION AS AN INSTRUMENT TO DRAW THE ATTENTION OF THE PUBLIC TO THOSE ACTIONS OF THE SUHARTO GOVERNMENT WHICH CAN BE ALLEGED TO DEVIATE FROM A STRICT INTERPRETATION OF THE 1945 CONSTITUTION, AT LEAST AS THEY THEMSELVES VIEW IT. MERDEKA EDITOR B.M. DIAH TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE FOUNDATION HAS BEEN IN PREPARATION FOR SOME TIME AND IS AN OUTGROWTH OF THE SAWITO AFFAIR, RECEIVING MUCH OF ITS IMPETUS FROM HATTA. IF TRUE, THIS MAY PRESAGE MORE EFFORTS TO PERSUADE SUHARTO TO VOLUNTARILY RESIGN. ANOTHER NEWSPAPER EDITOR HAS COMMENTED THAT THE PRESENCE

OF GENERAL NASUTION IN THE FOUNDATION WILL MAKE IT ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO TREAT IT LIGHTLY, AND ITS ACTIVITIES WILL BE WATCHED CLOSRELY FOR ANY INDICATION THAT IT MAY BE DISTURBING THE UNITY OF THE ARMED FORCES. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE FOUNDATION HAS BEEN SET UP WITH ONE EYE ON THE 1982 ELECTIONS, AND IT MAY REPRESENT AN ATTEMPT TO COUNTER THE GOVERNMENT'S USE OF THE SUKARNO REVIVAL MANEUVER BUILDING UP THE PDI TO BALANCE THE PPP. THE FOUNDATION IN ITSELF WILL NOT UNITE THE PPP WITH THE PDI AND OTHER OPPOSITION ELEMENTS TO OPPOSE GOLKAR IN 1982, BUT IT SUGGESTS A DESIRE FOR MORE COOPERATION AMONG THOSE CRITICAL OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT.
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